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ABSTRACT

This report describes economic, social, and political characteristics of the lower Rio Grande Valley with implications for the educational system, and presents preliminary findings on how south Texas schools are integrating new immigrant Mexican students. The lower Rio Grande Valley comprises four Texas counties and northern Tamaulipas, Mexico. For economic reasons, the population is exploding on both sides of the border, and the percentage of young people is much higher than in Texas overall. With border restrictions quite loose, the valley is becoming a cultural and economic unit, and schools on the U.S. side are being flooded with new immigrant students. In addition to children who immigrate with their families, many older Mexican teenagers are choosing to cross the border, alone or with relatives, to seek American schooling. Texas schools may not discriminate against homeless students nor probe about their living arrangements. Interviews with recently arrived Mexican students and their English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers reveal that the ESL program allows these students to integrate gradually while preserving aspects of their own culture. Teachers have considerable autonomy in selecting appropriate content for their classes. With first-hand knowledge of their students' situation, many ESL teachers are very supportive and act as student advocates. This paper also examines immigrant students' educational attitudes and student subcultures, and considers questions about the goals and outcomes of education in light of the valley's ambiguous political and economic situation. (SV)

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BASIC EDUCATION IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT OR A COLONIAL SYSTEM?

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THE QUESTION PUT IN THE TITLE WOULD BE ANSWERED DIFFERENTLY BY PSACHAROPOULOS OR LEVIN LOOKING AT THE SAME DATA. KLEES (1989) MAKES THE POINT THAT LABOR MARKETS DO NOT FOLLOW NEAT FORMULAE DEVELOPED BY THE HUMAN CAPITAL EXPERTS. OTHER PARADIGMS MUST BE SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT OR UNDERDEVELOPMENT. WEILER MADE THE POINT LONG AGO THAT THE RATIONAL PLANNING ENGAGED IN BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAS BEEN LARGELY A FUTILE EXERCISE. OTHERS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT PLANNING IS WHAT THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY OR CORE MEMBER ALWAYS PRESCRIBES FOR THE PERIPHERY MEMBER, EVEN THOUGH THE PRESCRIPTION OF PLANNING WOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTED BY THE CORE MEMBER FOR ITSELF. THE DEVELOPED MEMBER FEELS SUPERIOR ENOUGH TO PRESCRIBE APPROACHES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION BASED UPON DUBIOUS ASSUMPTIONS MORE BECAUSE OF INTUITION AND THE POWER OF INFLUENCE OVER LESS DEVELOPED SYSTEMS AND PEOPLE. TYPICAL OF SUCH RELATIONSHIPS IS THE TENDENCY TO BLAME THE PEOPLE OF A PERIPHERAL UNIT BECAUSE THEY EXHIBIT LESS OF THE QUALITIES OF EVERYTHING CORRELATED WITH COGNITIVE (READ MEMORY PERFORMANCE MEASURED BY MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS) STATUS. THE CORE'S EXPLANATION OF THE LACK OF SUCCESS OF THE PERIPHERAL GROUP IS THAT IT SIMPLY LACKS THE STOCK OF EDUCATED PEOPLE TO CREATE A MODERN ECONOMY. UNMENTIONED ARE THE STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ECONOMIES OF PERIPHERAL AREAS VIS A VIS THOSE OF CORE AREAS ON WHICH THEY ARE DEPENDENT. IT'S LIKE SAYING THAT THE TROUBLE WITH THE COLOR BLACK IS THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH WHITE IN IT; IF IT HAD MORE WHITE IT WOULDN'T BE SO BLACK. EASY. BUT ALSO A TAUTOLOGY AND NOT AN EXPLANATION FOR ANYTHING.

I TAKE COMFORT FROM THE FACT THAT KLEES, WHO IS ONE OF THOSE PRECIOUS FEW WHO THINKS ABOUT WHAT NUMBERS SUCH AS RATES OF RETURN, ETC. CAN'T DO FOR THOSE WHO THINK ABOUT WHAT GOVERNMENTS OUGHT OR OUGHT NOT TO DO. THIS PAPER IS AN ATTEMPT TO BEGIN TO SKETCH THE OUTLINE OF A SETTING WHICH IS COLONIAL TO THE REST OF THE STATE OF TEXAS OR MORE ACCURATELY, PERIPHERAL TO BOTH THE CORES OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO. I DESCRIBE A CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC UNIT WHICH IS DISADVANTAGED IN MANY RESPECTS AND WHICH IS LOOKED UPON BY THE REST OF THE STATE AS THE POOR, BEGGING AND UNDESERVING

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RELATIVE. IF THE VALLEY WERE TO INCREASE THE VALUE OF ITS HUMAN CAPITAL TO THE POINT WHERE THE MIGRANT LABORERS NO LONGER SAW THEIR FUTURES IN COTTON FIELDS AND IN THE BACK OF TRUCKS LOADING PRODUCE, DALLAS FOLKS WOULD BE HORRIFIED AT THE LOSS OF THE DOCILE LABOR. DALLAS, LITTLE ROCK AND SACRAMENTO HAVE A STAKE IN THE VALLEY BEING POOR AND BACKWARD IN ITS EDUCATIONAL INDICES, AND THE CONTEMPT OF VALLEY SCHOOLS IS ACCOMPANIED BY A REAL FEAR THAT THIS RESOURCE OF SURPLUS LABOR SEGMENTED INTO AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER LOW CLASS OCCUPATIONS WOULD BE LOST IF THE VALLEY'S ECONOMY AND ITS SCHOOLS IMPROVED TOGETHER. BOTH THE ECONOMY AND THE SCHOOLS OF THE VALLEY ARE STRUCTURED AT THIS TIME TO BE PERIPHERAL AND POOR. AND THEREIN IS MY STARTING POINT.

IN THIS PAPER I PRESENT A DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS WHO COME INTO THE VALLEY FROM MEXICO IN LARGE NUMBERS. THEY RENEW THE OUTFLOW AND IN FACT ARE BUILDING THE POPULATION OF THE VALLEY TO METRO AREA DIMENSIONS. ARE THEY SIMPLY GOING TO BE PART OF THE MARXIAN SURPLUS ARMY OF LABOR? OR IS THERE SOME INDICATION THAT THE HUMAN CAPITAL MODEL EXPLAINS WHAT IS GOING ON, AND THAT AS SCHOOLS TURN OUT BETTER EDUCATED STUDENTS THAT A MORE EDUCATED WORK FORCE WILL STIMULATE THE EMERGENCE OF A MODERN ECONOMY?

WHAT IS THE VALLEY?

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY IS A GROUP OF FOUR COUNTIES IN TEXAS LYING SOUTH OF A LINE DRAWN THROUGH LAREDO TO FALFURRIAS TO THE GULF OF MEXICO. THAT IS ROUGHLY THE LINE OF DEMARCATION FOR THE UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL AT WHICH A SCRUTINY OF TRAFFIC TAKES PLACE TO SEE WHETHER THE VEHICLES ARE CARRYING NON-U.S. CITIZENS AND DRUGS. BELOW THAT LINE, MANY IMMIGRANTS ENTER AND MAY GO BACK AND FORTH TO THEIR COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIO BRAVO IS THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS, INCREASINGLY UNITED WITH THE SOUTH VALLEY OF TEXAS IN AN ECONOMY AND CULTURE. THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE VALLEY HAS MORE IN COMMON WITH THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS CULTURALLY AND ECONOMICALLY THAN WITH THE REST OF THE STATE OF TEXAS. FROM CORPUS CHRISTI NORTHWARD, THE VALLEY IS VIEWED AS A COLONY.

THE FALFURRIAS LINE ROUGHLY DIVIDES THE RANCH CULTURE AND CITIES NORTH OF THE LINE FROM THE FARMING AREAS TO THE SOUTH ALONG THE RIVER. THE RIVER DOMINATES THE AREA TO THE SOUTH OF THE BOUNDARY, WHILE THE GREAT CITIES AND THEIR SATELLITES DOMINATE THE AREAS NORTH OF THE BOUNDARY. SOUTH OF THE LINE, SPANISH IS SPOKEN ALMOST EVERYWHERE.

IN THE VALLEY AND IN THE AREA IMMEDIATELY TO THE NORTH OF IT, AS FAR AS CORPUS CHRISTI, THE PARTICIPATION OF MEXICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM BECAME ONE OF PATRONISMO DOMINATED BY ANGLO BOSSES IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY (DE LEON). ANGLO RANCHERS AND URBAN REFORMERS ALIKE DETESTED THE MEXICAN AMERICANS FOR THEIR RELIGION, COLOR, AND HABITS OF POLITICAL LOYALTY AND KEPT

MOST OF THEM FROM VOTING. ANGLO PATRONS DELIVERED THE VOTES OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN CERTAIN RURAL COUNTIES WITH NEARLY PERFECT PRECISION. THAT WAS THE MACHINERY WHICH PROVIDED LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON WITH HIS TARDY AND MICROSCOPIC MARGIN TO SEND HIM TO THE SENATE IN 1948. IN ONLY ONE COUNTY, STARR, THE SMALLEST OF THE THREE COUNTIES OF THIS STUDY, A MEXICAN AMERICAN PATRON AND HIS SONS RAN THE COUNTY. IN THE 1970'S THE MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE VALLEY BEGAN TO GET OUT FROM UNDER THE ANGLO BOSSES AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THE VOTE OF PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO HAVE BROUGHT CANDIDATE CLINTON TO MCALLEN THE NIGHT BEFORE THE 1992 ELECTION FOR ONE LAST APPEAL TO ITS MAINLY MEXICAN AMERICAN CONSTITUENCY.

THE EFFECTS OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM ON SCHOOLING FOR MEXICAN AMERICANS WAS DEVASTATING AFTER THE CIVIL WAR. WITH NO WAY TO INFLUENCE THE POLITICAL PROCESS, THE SCHOOLS FOR THE CHILDREN BECAME MORE AND MORE SEGREGATED AND INFERIOR TO THOSE FOR ANGLO CHILDREN IN EVERY WAY. EVEN THE CHURCHES SEGREGATED THEIR CONGREGATIONS BY HOURS OF SERVICES. THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION OF THE 1970'S FOLLOWED A LONG SERIES OF COURT CHALLENGES WHICH WERE FINALLY SUCCESSFUL LONG AFTER BROWN V. BD. OF EDUCATION (1954) IN ENDING THE PRACTICE OF KEEPING MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN IN POOR, SEGREGATED FACILITIES. BROWN WAS ACTUALLY A SETBACK FOR THE MEXICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS BECAUSE IN CITIES SUCH AS AUSTIN AND HOUSTON, MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN WERE ASSIGNED TO DESEGREGATE BLACK SCHOOLS, LEAVING THE ATTENDANCE OF ANGLO CHILDREN UNCHANGED (DE LEON). NOT UNTIL THE SUPREME COURT RECOGNIZED THE STATUS OF HISPANICS AS A MINORITY IN THE KEYES (1973) CASE DID THE MEXICAN AMERICANS IN TEXAS FINALLY GET A CHANCE TO ENTER DECENT SCHOOLS (SAN MIGUEL).

SOUTH OF THE LINE, FARMING HAS DOMINATED THE ECONOMY ALONG WITH THE SERVICING OF THOSE WHO COME FROM THE NORTH TO KEEP FROM FREEZING IN THE NORTH CENTRAL STATES. THERE IS A CULTURE OF THE AGING "WINTER TEXANS" WHO HAVE THEIR SQUARE DANCES, CARD GAMES, AND CRAFTS SHOWS. THEY VOLUNTEER TO HELP OUT IN SCHOOLS AS TUTORS, LIBRARY MONITORS OR GUEST SPEAKERS. HOWEVER, FARMING IS NOW GIVING WAY IN IMPORTANCE TO LIGHT INDUSTRY, SERVICES AND RETAILING TO THE PEOPLE OF TWO MEXICAN STATES SINCE 1980. SERVING THE MAQUILA INDUSTRIES OF THE NORTHERN PART OF THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS HAS BECOME IMPORTANT AS WELL. IN 1993, THE FIRST MAQUILA ON THE AMERICAN SIDE ESTABLISHED BY A MEXICAN FIRM WAS ANNOUNCED (MONITOR, 11 MARCH 1993). THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE PACT IS ANTICIPATED TO GIVE AN ENORMOUS ECONOMIC IMPETUS TO THIS VALLEY, AND ALREADY AMERICAN FIRMS ARE POSITIONING THEMSELVES IN THE VALLEY TO BE READY FOR IT. IF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION DECIDES NOT TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT, THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT HE HAS HAD IN THE VALLEY WILL DISAPPEAR IMMEDIATELY.

THE VALLEY REALLY IS A DELTA WHICH IS CUT BY THE SHALLOW DITCH OF THE RIO GRANDE RIVER. IRRIGATED FARMING DATES BACK TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WHEN JOSE DE ESCANDON BROUGHT PEOPLE FROM MEXICO

TO SETTLE ALONG THE RIVER (DE LEON). THE FAMILIES, AMONG THEM THE ACEVEDOS, CAVAZOS, GARZAS, DE LA GARZAS, HINOJOSAS, TREVINOS, AND CANTUS, WERE GIVEN RIGHTS FROM THE KING OF SPAIN TO SETTLE ALONG THE RIVER ON NARROW PLOTS, ABOUT 3/4 OF A MILE WIDE, STRETCHING BACK TO THE NORTH ABOUT 12 MILES. THESE "PORCIONES" EVENTUALLY BECAME CITIES AND SMALLER FARMS ALONG THE RIO GRANDE DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, WHEN LAND PROMOTERS CALLED THIS AREA THE "VALLEY" SO AS TO ATTRACT NORTHERN PEOPLE WHO WANTED EITHER TO INVEST IN CHEAP LAND OR TO SPEND THE WINTERS IN A WARM AREA. THE LAND IS IDEAL FOR FARMING, ONCE IT IS CLEARED OF BRUSH, BECAUSE IT IS FLAT AND EASILY IRRIGATED WITH UNDERGROUND WATER, PROVIDING TWO OR THREE CROPS A YEAR. COTTON, ONIONS, GRAPEFRUIT, SUGAR, CABBAGES AND LETTUCE ARE AMONG THE CASH CROPS. THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IS DECLINING SOMEWHAT AS SMALL FACTORIES AND SERVICES ASSUME GREATER IMPORTANCE.

ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER, THE LAND WAS REARRANGED DURING THE REIGN OF PRESIDENT PORFIRIO DIAZ (1876-1910), WITH LARGE HOLDERS OBTAINING THE BEST LAND ALONG THE RIVER. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ANGLO AMERICANS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY DISPOSSESSED MANY OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL LAND GRANTEES THROUGH TRICKERY, VIOLENCE, IMPOSITION OF YEARLY TAXES WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO MEXICAN AND SPANISH PRACTICE, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF LAND DEEDS IN AN EPIDEMIC OF COURTHOUSE FIRES. THE TEXAS RANGERS, CALLED "RINCHES" BY THE MEXICAN AMERICANS, WERE USED TO SUPPRESS MEXICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND FORCED MANY OF THEM TO SELL THEIR LAND. SOME OF THE DESCENDANTS WERE ABLE TO HANG ON TO THEIR LAND AND A FEW FARMING FAMILIES STILL BEAR THE NAMES OF THE ESCANDON GROUP PATENTEES. THE WORD "MERCED" WAS NOT USED IN THE VALLEY AS IT WAS IN NEW MEXICO.

THE BORDER WAS LOOSE AND EVEN UNDEFINED UNTIL WELL AFTER THE U.S. CIVIL WAR. DURING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION WHICH BEGAN IN 1910, THE VIOLENCE SPILLED ACROSS THE FRONTIER AS ARMED BANDS CHASED ENEMIES AND RESTED IN REMOTE PLACES. THE BORDER WAS UNPOLICED UNTIL THE 1930'S AND REALLY WASN'T CAREFULLY WATCHED BY THE US BORDER PATROL UNTIL THE 1950'S. THE TRAFFIC IN GOODS ACROSS THE BORDER FOLLOWED THE TIMES; THE 1920'S WAS A TIME OF GREAT ALCOHOL TRAFFIC AND DURING THE WARS AND GASOLINE CRISES, AMERICANS WENT TO THE OTHER SIDE TO BUY GOODS WHICH WERE MUCH CHEAPER AND MORE ABUNDANT THAN ON THE AMERICAN SIDE. TODAY, THE MEXICAN PEOPLE COME IN THOUSANDS EVERY WEEK TO BUY AMERICAN GOODS WHICH ARE CHEAPER AND OF SOMEWHAT BETTER QUALITY IN THE BIG RETAIL CENTERS, WALMART AND K-MART WHERE PEOPLE GO FOR EVERYTHING FROM EGGS TO COMPUTERS, AND THE UPSCALE PLAZA MALL WHERE GUESS AND PEPE JEANS GO QUICKLY. BECAUSE VALLEY MERCHANTS DEPEND UPON THIS BUSINESS, THE BORDER IS LOOSE; MERCHANTS DO NOT LIKE TO HAVE TRAFFIC DELAYED FOR CLOSE INSPECTION TO SEE WHETHER THE RIDERS ARE U.S. CITIZENS OR NOT.

THE BORDER IS LOOSE FOR ANOTHER REASON: MANY AMERICANS IN THE VALLEY HAVE MEXICAN MAIDS, GARDENERS, NANNIES AND YARD WORKERS WHOM THEY COULD NOT AFFORD ELSEWHERE. MORE IMPORTANT ARE THE MANY

MIGRANT WORKERS WHO CROSS THE BORDER TO FOLLOW THE FLOW NORTHWARD BEGINNING IN APRIL AND RETURNING IN NOVEMBER. MANY OF THEM STAY IN THE VALLEY TO SEEK WORK IN CONSTRUCTION OR SERVICES. ANOTHER GROUP WHICH IS GROWING IN IMPORTANCE IS THE MANAGING CLASS OF THE MAQUILADORAS, MANY OF WHOM ARE BUYING HOUSES ON THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER AND CAN ARRANGE GUEST STATUS WITH THE BORDER AUTHORITIES FOR THIS PURPOSE. REAL ESTATE AGENCIES ADVERTISE TO THIS GROUP. THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO PUT THEIR CHILDREN IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS.

THE HISPANIC CULTURE OF BOTH SIDES OF THE RIO BRAVO/GRANDE HAS DISTINCT FEATURES WHICH MARK IT FROM THE NEW MEXICAN, FOR EXAMPLE. MANY WORDS IN THE VALLEY ARE NOT USED IN NEW MEXICO. "ACEQUIA" OR IRRIGATION DITCH, SO IMPORTANT IN NEW MEXICO IS NOT KNOWN IN THE VALLEY. INSTEAD, "RESACA" IS THE WORD. SPANISH IS HEARD MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY IN THE WORK PLACES OF THE VALLEY THAN IN NEW MEXICO. STUDENTS ANSWER TEACHERS' ENGLISH COMMENTS WITH SPANISH, AND TALK WITH EACH OTHER EXTENSIVELY IN SPANISH. SOME PURISTS LAMENT THE MIXING OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER, BUT LIVING LANGUAGES ARE ALWAYS CHANGING AND BORROWING IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. OUR LADY OF GUADELUPE, SO IMPORTANT A PART OF MEXICANS' RELIGION, IS HONORED HERE, BUT EVEN MORE POPULAR FOR NORTHERN MEXICANS IS OUR LADY OF SAN JUAN DE LOS LAGOS, WHICH IS A SHRINE IN NORTHERN MEXICO. IN SAN JUAN, TEXAS, THERE IS ALSO A SHRINE TO O.L. OF SAN JUAN DE LOS LAGOS, DATING FROM 1971 WHICH SEATS NEARLY THREE THOUSAND AND IS FILLED EACH SUNDAY WITH AS MANY AS FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE AT THREE MAIN MASSES, EACH WITH MARIACHI MUSIC. THE LUMINARIA, SO FAMOUS IN NEW MEXICO, IS NOT USED IN THE VALLEY AT CHRISTMAS TIME. THE STAFF OF LIFE AT NOON FOR NEW MEXICANS, THE BOWL OF CHILE WHICH CLEANS OUT THE RUST IN ONE'S SYSTEM, GIVES WAY IN THE VALLEY TO FAJITAS AND TAMALES. THE WORD, "CHICANO" IS NOT USED IN THE VALLEY, BUT TEJANO IS PREFERRED EVEN OVER HISPANIC. MEXICAN AMERICAN IS USED BUT SO MANY IMMIGRANTS ARE COMING FROM THAT COUNTRY THAT THE OLDER VALLEY RESIDENTS PREFER TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM THE "MOJADOS" OR WETBACKS. THAT PEJORATIVE TERM IS THROWN AT THE KIDS IN HIGH SCHOOL ESL CLASSES WHO HAVE RECENTLY IMMIGRATED BY MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS WHO ARE CITIZENS. IN RETURN THE NEWLY ARRIVED STUDENTS CALL THE ESTABLISHED MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS WHO LOOK DOWN UPON THEM "SANGRONES".

IN OTHER RESPECTS, THE CULTURES ARE SIMILAR, MARKED BY THE LOVE OF CHILDREN, THE VERY TIGHT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ALWAYS BRING THE OLDER CHILDREN HOME AND WHICH HELP GET FAMILY MEMBERS JOBS OR HELP COUSINS ESTABLISH BUSINESSES TOGETHER, THE FRIENDLY GREETINGS TO EVERYONE, AND THE INTENSE INTEREST IN POLITICS WHICH AFFECT THE CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS AS WELL AS THE LARGER CONTESTS. THE LIBERATION OF POLITICS FROM THE ANGLO BOSS DOMINATION IN THE EARLY 1970'S RESULTED IN A COMPLETE REVERSAL IN MANY OFFICES GOING TO MEXICAN AMERICANS. THE CONGRESSMAN FROM THE LOWER VALLEY, KIKA DE LA GARZA, IS CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AND SO HOLDS A POWERFUL POSITION BY VIRTUE OF HIS SENIORITY. SECRETARY BENTSEN IS ALSO FROM THE VALLEY AND BELONGS TO ONE OF THE

OLD ANGLO FARMING FAMILIES THAT BECAME POWERFUL.

THE CULTURE AND WORK OF THE VALLEY MAKE IT A UNIT WITH THE RIVER MARKING A POLITICAL DIVISION AND SERVING AS THE SPINE OF A HUMAN/ECOLOGICAL UNIT. BUSINESS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER IS SO INTERDEPENDENT THAT EVEN A MOMENTARY INTERRUPTION IN THE TRAFFIC CAUSES CONSTERNATION ON BOTH SIDES WITH IMMEDIATE MESSAGES TO THE CAPITOLS OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO RESUME THE FLOW. BORDER GUARDS AND IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS ON THE AMERICAN SIDE AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES LEARN THAT THE FLOW, RATHER THAN INTERRUPTION AND SLOWDOWN IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT. SCENES WHICH PEOPLE REMEMBER FROM NOT TOO LONG AGO OF US BORDER GUARDS DETAINING PEOPLE WITH DARK SKINS REGARDLESS OF CITIZENSHIP COULD RESULT TODAY IN THE GUARD'S BEING SUSPENDED AND SUED, OR AT LEAST TRANSFERRED TO A LOCATION ALONG THE ALASKA-CANADA BORDER. HOWEVER, SOME YOUNG MEXICAN AMERICANS ARE STILL HASSLED BY THE PATROL AS THEY GO THROUGH. THE BUSINESS OF THE BORDER IS SO IMPORTANT THAT THE BORDER GUARDS MUST LET MANY PEOPLE THROUGH WITHOUT QUESTIONING BECAUSE TO DELAY EACH CAR TO ALLOW SCRUTINY WOULD SLOW DOWN THE FLOW OF BUSINESS. THE FALFURRIAS LINE, SIXTY MILES NORTH OF EDINBURG, IS NOW THE PLACE WHERE AUTOS ARE STOPPED BY NARCS AND THE MIGRA TO LOOK FOR DRUGS AND STOWAWAYS.

BECAUSE OF THE BUSINESS CLIMATE AND BECAUSE OF OTHER FORCES, THE BORDER NOW IS MUCH MORE OPEN FOR STUDENTS WHO WISH TO GO TO AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN THE BORDER REGION. THE PLYLER V. DOE (1982) DECISION OF THE US SUPREME COURT STATED THAT HOUSTON CHILDREN COULD NOT BE DENIED ACCESS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLING, IF SUCH WERE OFFERED TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF A STATE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL PROMISE, SIMPLY BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS WERE UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A STATE LAW THAT PROHIBITS SCHOOLS FROM DISCRIMINATING AGAINST HOMELESS CHILDREN. SINCE MANY IMMIGRANT STUDENTS ARE HOMELESS BY DEFINITION, THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO SCHOOLING WHEREVER THEY APPLY. THE SCHOOL CAN REQUEST AN ADDRESS AND MAY INQUIRE WHO THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT IS FOR THE STUDENT, BUT MAY NOT PROBE AS TO WHETHER THE STUDENT IS LIVING WITH PARENTS OR RELATIVES.

A FLOOD OF STUDENTS IS NOW COMING INTO THE SCHOOLS. EACH OF THE VALLEY DISTRICTS HAS BEEN OPENING A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF ABOUT 300-600 STUDENTS PER YEAR. EACH DISTRICT IS NOW OPENING A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL EVERY OTHER YEAR, WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 2,000 AND ABOVE, ALWAYS EXCEEDING PLANNED ESTIMATES. EVERY NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL HAS TEMPORARY BUILDINGS IN USE FROM THE DAY IT IS OPENED. EVERY SCHOOL HAS BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE LOWER GRADES WHICH USUALLY MEANS THAT CHILDREN IN GRADES ONE THROUGH FOUR WORK IN BOTH LANGUAGES. IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS THERE ARE ESL CLASSES WHICH ARE ORGANIZED FOR THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN. AGES IN THESE CLASSES BEAR NO RELATION TO THE AGES OF AMERICAN (TEJANO) STUDENTS BECAUSE THE IMMIGRANTS COME IN SUCH LARGE NUMBERS THAT PLACING THEM EXACTLY BY PRIOR EDUCATION IS OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE. A LOOSE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS IN THESE ESL CLASSES RUN AT LEAST 2,500 PER YEAR, BUT THE NUMBERS ARE HARD TO DETERMINE AND COULD BE MUCH

HIGHER.

THE VALLEY'S HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VALLEY'S DEMOGRAPHICS FOLLOW. THE MEDIAN AGE OF THE POPULATION IN THE VALLEY IS 26 WITH SOME COUNTIES EVEN LOWER (METRO FACTS). THIS CONTRASTS WITH SLIGHTLY OVER THIRTY FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS AND WELL OVER THIRTY FOR THE UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE. ONE QUICK INDICATOR THAT THE VALLEY IS DIFFERENT IS THE PRESENCE AT RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES IN THE SHRINE OF SAN JUAN ON SUNDAYS OF A VERY YOUTHFUL CONGREGATION WITH SO MANY BABIES CONPETING WITH THE PRIEST DURING THE SERMON THAT THE PREACHER MUST HAVE A VERY GOOD VOICE. FOR ONE WHO IS ACCUSTOMED TO THE GRAY-HAIRED CONGREGATIONS OF THE NORTHEAST IN WHICH ONE SEES VERY FEW CHILDREN, THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL SIGN OF A YOUNG POPULATION WITH MANY CHILDREN. ANOTHER ONE IS THE PRESENCE OF MANY YOUTHFUL GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSES WHO RESEMBLE UNDERGRADUATES. WHEN ONE VISITS SCHOOLS, THE YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE OF PRINCIPALS AND COUNSELORS, AS WELL AS THE TEEN-LIKE APPEARANCE OF SOME OF THE TEACHERS, INDICATE THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE BEING RUN BY PHYSICALLY ABLE AND ENERGETIC MEN AND WOMEN WHO DO NOT RESEMBLE THE TIRED, GRAY LEGIONS FOR WHOM AL SHANKER IS THE CHAMPION FOR MAKING TEACHERS' LIVES EASIER AND INCREASING THEIR DISTANCE FROM STUDENTS. HE WOULD NOT LIKE THE WORK ETHIC OF THE VALLEY TEACHERS OR THE AFFECTION TEACHERS AND STUDENTS HAVE FOR EACH OTHER.

THE PERCENTAGES OF HISPANICS IN THREE VALLEY COUNTIES IN THIS PAPER, CAMERON, HIDALGO AND STARR, WERE 82%, 85% AND 97%, RESPECTIVELY, IN 1990 (U.S. CENSUS). HISPANIC PEOPLE ARE YOUNGER THAN ANGLO, BLACK AND ASIAN PEOPLE IN TEXAS. THIRTY PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF TEXAS WERE UNDER 19, BUT 36% OF CAMERON COUNTY PEOPLE, 39% OF HIDALGO COUNTY PEOPLE, AND 41% OF STARR COUNTY PEOPLE WERE IN THAT GROUP IN 1990, SO THE GROWTH IN THE POPULATION OF THE THREE COUNTY AREA IS LARGELY DUE TO HISPANIC BIRTHS AND IMMIGRATION.

THE THREE COUNTIES GREW FROM 520,000 IN 1980 TO 684,000 IN 1990, AND ARE EXPECTED TO GROW TO 952,000 BY 2000 (METRO FACTS). ACCORDING TO THE US CENSUS ESTIMATES, THE MCALLEN METROPOLITAN AREA IS THE TENTH FASTEST GROWING AREA IN THE COUNTRY SINCE 1990. TWO OF THE COUNTIES ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO GROW MUCH MORE THAN THE SMALLEST, STARR COUNTY. HOUSING UNITS IN THE THREE COUNTIES INCREASED ABOUT TWO AND ONE-THIRD TIMES BETWEEN 1970 AND 1990 (METRO FACTS, P. 21). TEN THOUSAND JOBS WERE ADDED IN THE THREE COUNTIES SINCE 1990. ACCORDING TO THE VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE THREE COUNTIES WERE UNDERCOUNTED BY BETWEEN 10% AND 15% IN 1990, PARTLY DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO PROBABLY AVOIDED COUNTING AND TO THE FAULTY METHODS PROVIDED BY THE CENSUS BUREAU TO OBTAIN RELIABLE DATA ON YOUNG POPULATIONS OF COLOR.

THE POPULATION OF THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS IS YOUNGER EVEN THAN THE TEXAS PORTION OF THE VALLEY. FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF THE STATE'S POPULATION WAS UNDER THE AGE OF 19 AND 35% OF THE POPULATION IS UNDER THE AGE OF 14, ACCORDING TO THE 1990 CENSUS (CENSO NACIONAL). THE LARGEST COHORT WAS THE 15-19 GROUP WHICH WAS SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN THE YOUNGER THREE, 0-4, 5-9, AND 10-14. THE LATE TEEN AGERS WERE THE PRODUCT OF THE TOP YEARS OF GROWTH IN THE NATION'S POPULATION. THEY ARE OF INTEREST TO THIS AUTHOR BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ONES WHO ARE DECIDING IN WHICH COUNTRY TO ATTEND SCHOOL, AND THEY MOVE TO THE MEXICAN BORDER AREAS IN LARGE NUMBERS, USUALLY WITH FAMILY MEMBERS BUT OFTEN ALONE, TO SEEK OUT FRIENDS OR RELATIVES ON THE REYNOSA SIDE BEFORE MOVING ACROSS THE RIVER TO THE AMERICAN SIDE. WE HOPE TO INTERVIEW THOSE WHO STAY ON THE REYNOSA (MEXICAN) SIDE TO FIND OUT WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CROSS FOR SCHOOLING. THEY MAY BE LESS RISK ORIENTED OR MAY HAVE FAMILY OBLIGATIONS WHICH KEEP THEM FROM MOVING ACROSS, OR THEY MAY BE JUST WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. THE DECISION TO MOVE NORTH TO THE REYNOSA, CAMARGO, MATAMOROS AREA IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE STATE OF TAMAULIPAS IS MOTIVATED BY THE GROWTH OF THE MAQUILA INDUSTRIES. HOWEVER, MANY OF THESE EMPLOY MAINLY WOMEN.

THE MEXICAN BORDER CITIES ARE EXPLODING IN POPULATION. ONE THIRD OF THE STATE'S POPULATION AND THAT OF REYNOSA CAME FROM STATES TO THE SOUTH, BY 1990. THE NEWCOMERS SETTLE IN THE COLONIAS OR VERY POOR SUBURBS WHICH ARE UNTOUCHED BY ANY GOVERNMENT SERVICES EXCEPT FOR SOME HIGH SCHOOL AGE VOLUNTEERS WHO VISIT THEM TO TEACH PEOPLE LITERACY SKILLS AT NIGHT. REYNOSA'S POPULATION WAS EVEN YOUNGER THAN THAT OF THE STATE, WITH HALF OF ITS POPULATION 19 OR UNDER.

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT DOES A GOOD JOB OF PROVIDING SCHOOLING FOR ITS CHILDREN. NINETY PERCENT OF ITS 6-14 YEAR OLDS IN TAMAULIPAS COULD READ AND WRITE, WHICH IS A VERY HIGH PERCENTAGE FOR A FOREIGN COUNTRY (CENSO NACIONAL). FOR THOSE WHO FEAR THE EFFECTS OF THE INFLUX OF MEXICAN STUDENTS ON AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL BUDGETS, CONSIDER THE SITUATION OF INCOMING CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE IF TEXAS SHARED A BOUNDARY WITH GUATEMALA OR PERU WHERE THE ATTENDANCE STATISTICS SHOW THAT A FRACTION OF THE CHILDREN COMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOL. MEXICO IS REALLY PULLING ITS WEIGHT IN ATTEMPTING TO PREPARE HUMAN CAPITAL FOR A MODERN ECONOMY IN A MODERN POLITY. THE PERCENTAGE OF ITS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES DEVOTED TO EDUCATION IN 1990 WAS 13.9%, COMPARED TO 1.7% FOR THE UNITED STATES (WORLD BANK, 1992). MOST EXPENDITURES FOR EDUCATION IN THE US ARE MADE BY STATES. THE TWO COUNTRIES' EDUCATIONAL INDICES FOR PERCENTAGES OF ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN IN BASIC EDUCATION ARE NOT FAR APART.

THE VALLEY HAS THE BEGINNINGS OF A VERY ACTIVE ECONOMY. PARTICIPANTS IN THE MODERN, OPEN ECONOMY REQUIRE DOCUMENTATION OF CITIZENSHIP. BUT THE SHADOW ECONOMY IS PROBABLY MUCH GREATER THAN THE MODERN ECONOMY. BARTERING IS VERY EXTENSIVE, ALONG WITH LOW WAGES OR WAGES IN PART PAID IN PRODUCE OR OTHER GOODS, CASH WITHOUT RECORD FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF SERVICES, AND TRADING OF SERVICES FOR

GOODS. THE SHADOW ECONOMY IS PART OF THE FABRIC OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE VALLEY, FAR MORE SO THAN IN OTHER AREAS OF THE U.S., OR IN PLACES POPULATED BY OTHER MINORITIES. THE MODERN ECONOMY IS GROWING, FED IN PART BY THE SHADOW ECONOMY WHICH SUSTAINS MANY LOW INCOME FAMILIES.

THE LINKAGE OF THE SCHOOLS TO THE ECONOMY OR TO WHAT WILL BE THE ECONOMY IS LOOSE. FEW ATTEMPTS AT PLANNING FOR THE VALLEY'S ECONOMY HAVE BEEN MADE, AND SO SCHOOLS DO NOT HAVE ANY DIRECTIONS FOR THEIR STUDENTS WHO KEEP GRADUATING IN LARGER NUMBERS. THE SCHOOLS HAVE NO APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND NO WORK STUDY PROGRAMS, LARGELY BECAUSE THE ECONOMY WAS SO HEAVILY AGRICULTURAL UNTIL RECENTLY. FOOD PROCESSING HAS BEEN UNIMPORTANT BECAUSE THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN SHIPPED TO OTHER AREAS FOR PROCESSING OR HAVE BEEN SHIPPED OUT RAW. THE PLANTS THAT EXIST TURN OUT LOW VALUE PRODUCTS. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS WORK BEST IN A MATURE, MODERN ECONOMY WHERE STUDENTS CAN LEARN HOW TO PERFORM IN A WORKPLACE WHICH IS PART OF A COMPLEX MODERN SYSTEM. PUTTING STUDENTS IN PLACES TO LEARN TO SWEEP THE FLOORS AND CLEAN THE TOILETS AND BE ON TIME TO DO SO, DOESN'T REQUIRE MUCH IN THE WAY OF ACADEMIC SKILLS. WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS OF COURSE CAN BE ARRANGED IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THOSE IN THE VALLEY DO A GOOD JOB OF SELECTING EMPLOYERS WHO TEACH THE STUDENTS SOMETHING OF VALUE.

UNSURPRISINGLY, THERE IS NO ECONOMIC-EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR THIS AREA. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR SOME TEXANS IS NO MORE ACCEPTABLE THAN ECONOMIC PLANNING. REGIONAL PLANNING IS RESTRICTED TO DATA ACCUMULATION AND PROJECTIONS. BECAUSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VALLEY ARE MORE LIKE THOSE OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY THAN A DEVELOPED ONE, THE DATA ARE NOT AS RELIABLE AS FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF THE STATE. ANOTHER REASON WHY INSTITUTIONALIST ECONOMISTS WOULD SAY THAT ATTEMPTS TO LINK EDUCATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MODELS IS DOOMED ANYWAY. WHAT PASSES FOR PUBLIC POLICY IS A RHETORIC OF BOOSTERISM WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE STATE TREATMENT OF THE VALLEY AS PERIPHERY. THERE ARE RATIONAL ANALYSES OF THE VALLEY'S ECONOMY WHICH POINT OUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF MORE SMALL SCALE, CHEAP PRODUCT INDUSTRIES, MORE SERVICE OF WHOLESALERS AND TRANSPORTERS TO AND FROM MEXICO, AND MORE WINTER TOURISM, WHICH HAS GROWN GREATLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE VALLEY TOURISM ATTRACTS A CERTAIN WINTER CLIENTELE BECAUSE RENTS AND SERVICES ARE CHEAP. THIS AREA DOES NOT ATTRACT A TOURIST WHO SPENDS A LOT OF MONEY. SO FAR THE VALLEY IS A BARGAIN FOR THOSE WHO COME TO SPEND THE WINTER - ONE CAN GET A NICE APARTMENT FOR $400 TO $500 PER MONTH, AND ONE CAN BUILD A NICE SMALL HOUSE FOR $55,000. CHEAP LABOR MEANS A CHEAP LIVING STANDARD. THERE IS NO SIGN THAT DEVELOPERS ARE TRYING TO RAISE THE SCALE OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATIONS.

ZONING IS LARGELY UNKNOWN. COLONIAS, OR UNZONED AREAS DEVELOP AROUND REYNOSA AND OTHER MEXICAN BORDER CITIES AND IN BETWEEN THE AMERICAN BORDER CITIES. THESE ARE PLACES WHERE ONE CAN BUY LAND VERY CHEAPLY, SUBDIVIDE IT INTO TINY PLOTS AND SINK A WELL AND A SEPTIC TANK. NO LAWS FORCE ONE TO HOOK UP TO SEWER OR WATER LINES.

THIS IS WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE UNDERCLASS MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS LIVE AND WHERE MANY THOUSANDS OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN CITIZENS LIVE.

THE ECOLOGY OF VALLEY SCHOOLS

THE ENTIRE VALLEY IS A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN ARE BUSSED TO SCHOOL. FEW WALK EVEN SHORT DISTANCES. BUS RIDES OF ONE AND A HALF HOURS ARE COMMON. STUDENTS GET ON BUSES AT 6:15 - 6:30 AND ARRIVE AT SCHOOL AT 7:30 IN TIME FOR THE FREE BREAKFAST. CLASSES START ABOUT 8:30. STUDENTS RETURN HOME ABOUT 5:00 PM.

THE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR REGION (OR INTERMEDIATE UNIT) ONE WHICH INCLUDES THE VALLEY BETWEEN LAREDO AND BROWNSVILLE, IS 94% HISPANIC, WHICH IS NEARLY ALL MEXICAN AMERICAN, THE LARGEST SUCH PERCENTAGE IN THE STATE AND PROBABLY THE NATION (SNAPSHOT '92). BLACK ENROLLMENT IS NEGLIGIBLE. OVER THREE- FOURTHS OF THE STUDENTS ARE CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED, BY FAR THE HIGHEST FOR THE STATE. BROWNSVILE HAS THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF LOW INCOME PEOPLE OF ANY CITY IN THE UNITED STATES AS OF MARCH, 1993. ENROLLMENTS OF HISPANIC CHILDREN RANGE FROM 83% TO 100%, WHICH MEANS THAT DESEGREGATION IS IMPOSSIBLE. ENROLLMENTS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION ARE 35% FOR THE REGION, BY FAR THE HIGHEST IN THE STATE, AND EXTREMELY HIGH NATIONALLY. BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE VALLEY IS NOT NEARLY AS COMPLEX AS IN LOS ANGELES WHERE THAT TERM IMPLIES A HUNDRED DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, BUT IN THE VALLEY ONLY ENGLISH AND SPANISH. IT IS NO WONDER THAT SO MUCH HOPE AND SO MUCH EFFORT ARE PLACED IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL (USUALLY TWO YEARS) IS WHERE THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS ARE PLACED IN ORDER TO TEACH THEM ENGLISH SKILLS AND TO SOCIALIZE THEM INTO AMERICAN WAYS. ALL THE INTERVIEWEES IN THIS STUDY WERE IN ESL CLASSES.

THE DROPOUT RATE IN REGION 1 IS THE HIGHEST IN THE STATE. THE STATEWIDE TESTING RESULTS SHOW THAT THE VALLEY SCHOOLS ARE THE LOWEST PERFORMERS, ACROSS SCHOOL AVERAGES, FOR THE STATE, PARTICULARLY FOR GRADES 7,9, AND 11. HOWEVER, THE ANGLO WHITE STUDENTS ARE THE SECOND HIGHEST IN THE STATE, COMING VERY CLOSE TO THE STUDENTS IN THE AUSTIN AREA. THE AVERAGES FOR THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN THE VALLEY WERE FOURTH LOWEST IN THE STATE.

THREE DISTRICTS NEAR SAN ANTONIO SERVE CHILDREN OF THE MILITARY; IN THESE THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN PASSING THE STATEWIDE TESTS APPROACHES OR EXCEEDS THOSE FOR ANGLO WHITE CHILDREN. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THESE HISPANIC CHILDREN ARE NOT AS LIKELY TO BE FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES. IN ONE DISTRICT IN THE CORPUS CHRISTI REGION, THE HISPANICS ARE IN LARGE PROPORTION AND ARE OF LOW INCOME FAMILIES BUT THERE THEY DO VERY WELL ON THE STATEWIDE TESTS. BEING HISPANIC DOES NOT NECESSARILY PULL DOWN THE TEST SCORES.

THE TAXABLE VALUE OF PROPERTY PER PUPIL IN REGION I WAS THE LOWEST IN THE STATE BY FAR (SNAPSHOT, 1992) IN 1992; ABOUT ONE FOURTH WHAT IT IS IN THE THREE TOP REGIONS IN THIS RESPECT. THE PERCENTAGES OF SCHOOL EXPENDITURES ACCOUNTED FOR BY STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS WERE THE HIGHEST IN THE STATE. THE STATE AID PER PUPIL FOR THE VALLEY SCHOOLS WAS THE HIGHEST IN THE STATE.

NATIONAL POLICY TO THIS POINT DOES NOT ALLOW AN OPEN BORDER BUT IT DOES ALLOW A POROUS BORDER AT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE/BRAVO SHORE.THE CONSEQUENCES ARE THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE GROWING FASTER THAN ANY OTHER REGION OF THE STATE OF TEXAS. FOR THE FIVE YEAR PERIOD ENDING IN 1992 THE VALLEY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT GREW 17.2% WHILE STATEWIDE GROWTH WAS 8.2% (SNAPSHOT '92). THAT GROWTH WAS IN SPITE OF THE HIGHEST DROPOUT IN THE STATE. FEDERAL FUNDS PAY FOR SUCH SPECIAL PROGRAMS AS THE MIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM, THE CHAPTER I AND HEADSTART PROGRAMS, SCHOOL LUNCHES AND A SMALL PART OF THE BILINGUAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. BUT THERE IS NO FEDERAL AID FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS OR FOR ESL CLASSES. THE IMPACT OF BEING A BORDER DISTRICT CLASSIFIES A DISTRICT AS ONE WITH HIGH PROPORTIONS OF AT RISK STUDENTS, BUT NO FEDERAL POLICY EXISTS TO HELP THOSE DISTRICTS WITH SPECIAL FUNDING, SUCH AS THEIR POLICE DEPARTMENTS HAVE TO HELP WITH BORDER OVERBURDEN.

ADD-ON STRUCTURES WITH UNDEFINED CONTENT ASSIST STUDENT SURVIVAL

WHAT IS BEST TO PREPARE THE HISPANIC STUDENTS INCLUDING THE RECENT IMMIGRANTS IS DEBATED CONSTANTLY. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE OVERWHELMINGLY HISPANIC STUDENT POPULATION ALL ARE IN THE NATURE OF SPECIAL ADD-ONS TO THE CURRICULUM. THESE ADD-ONS DON'T FIT INTO CHANGE OR REFORM SCHEMAS SUCH AS THAT ELABORATED BY NEWMAN (1993). THE ADD-ONS APPEAR OPPORTUNISTICALLY AS RESOURCES BECOME AVAILABLE AND AS ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS REALIZE THAT THEIR STUDENTS COULD BENEFIT FROM THE KIND OF PROGRAM WHICH COULD BE PUT TOGETHER. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED BUT THE DEFINITION OF CERTAIN CONTENT FOR THE ADD-ONS IS NOT CONSIDERED BECAUSE A MODEL FOR CONTENT OR SKILLS IS NOT AVAILABLE. A MORE IMPORTANT REASON IS THAT THEIR FUTURE WORKPLACE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT, AND LINKAGES TO EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE ANY KIND OF COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYING STUDENTS IS MISSING.

NEWMAN'S POINT IS THAT "...ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES ALONE ASSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NO PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS OR COMPETENCIES. UNLESS THE STRUCTURES PURSUE AN AGENDA OF PARTICULAR COMMITMENTS AND COMPETENCIES, THAT IS AN AGENDA OF POWERFUL CONTENT, THERE IS NO WAY TO PREDICT WHETHER EDUCATION WILL IMPROVE" (P. 11). HE DOES NOT DEFINE POWERFUL CONTENT. NOR HAVE CURRICULUM POST STRUCTURALISTS. THEY HAVE USED BITS AND PIECES OF THE CURRICULUM TO EXEMPLIFY THEIR LABELS OF THE PRESENT CONTENT. BUT HOW DO THEY PROPOSE TO CHANGE TEACHER BEHAVIOR TO DO WHAT NEWMAN PROPOSES MUST BE DONE? HE IS SIMPLY SAYING THAT WHAT IS TO BE TAUGHT IN THE STRUCTURE SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED - IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHAT IS INSIDE FROM THE LABEL. BUT WAIT, WHERE

IS THE TEACHER AUTONOMY TO DEFINE CONTENT THAT IS SO VALUED BY THOSE WHO PROPOSE RESISTANCE? POST STRUCTURALISTS CAN'T HAVE IT ALL WAYS AT ONCE. NEWMAN SOUNDS VERY MUCH LIKE A HARD CORE STRUCTURALIST.

IN THE VALLEY SCHOOLS, STRUCTURES CHANGE AS ADD-ONS ACCUMULATE, AND CONTENT IS NOT PLANNED WITH THE STRUCTURE. SO WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THAT? APPLE SAYS THAT MANY POST STRUCTURALISTS DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE REAL WORLD OF THE SCHOOL IN THEIR CRITICISMS, AND THAT SCHOLARS HAVE TO KEEP COMING BACK TO SEE THIS REAL WORLD (1993). THAT IS WHAT MAKES THE STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS INTERESTING AS ONE OBSERVES THEM IN SIT'.

THE BUDDING OF MANY SUCH AUTONOMOUS SUBUNITS WHICH ARISE WITH THE PROGRAMS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY AUTONOMOUS DEFINITION OF CONTENT. THE STRUCTURE PERMITS TEACHER CREATION OF CONTENT. LINKAGES OF THESE UNITS TO THE EMPLOYING WORLD OR THE SUPPORTIVE WORLD ARE ALSO WORKED OUT INDEPENDENTLY OF EACH OTHER, IF AT ALL. CONTENT AND LINKAGES ARE THERE BUT CAN'T BE PREDICTED BY STANDING OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF THE CLASSROOM - ONE HAS TO GO IN, TALK TO THE TEACHER, WATCH HER AND TALK WITH THE MIGRANT, IMMIGRANT, BILINGUAL, GED OR PREGNANT TEENAGER.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS VARIABLE CONTENT STRUCTURE ARE FOUND IN THE ESL PROGRAMS. THESE ARE COMMONLY MORNING-LONG BLOCKS OF TIME IN WHICH ONE TEACHER AND ONE AIDE WORK ON ENGLISH SKILLS WITH FROM 15 TO 25 STUDENTS. ONE TEACHER MAKES WORD LISTS FROM THE LAST STATEWIDE TEST, AS WELL AS FROM NEWSPAPERS, AND USES IT TO EXPLAIN MEANING, HELP THE STUDENTS RELATE THE ENGLISH TO SPANISH EQUIVALENTS, HAVE THE STUDENTS MAKE UP ENGLISH SENTENCES, PUT THE SENTENCES ON THE BOARD AND HAVE THE CLASS CRITIQUE EACH STUDENT'S SENTENCES. YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE THE TEST ORIGIN OF THE VOCABULARY WORDS, BUT ONE CAN'T ARGUE AGAINST CURRICULUM VALIDITY.

IN ANOTHER ESL CLASS, THE TEACHER USES SIMPLE READING UNITS AS THE START FOR READING AND VOCABULARY BUILDING SKILLS, AND THEN HAS STUDENTS INDIVIDUALLY WORK ON PERFECTING THEIR USE OF THE WORDS AND GRAMMAR STRUCTURE. ANOTHER TEACHER USES THE COMPUTER TO TEACH COMPOSITION, AFTER PRESENTING SOME BASIC VOCABULARY. THE COMPUTER ALLOWS CONSTANT REVISION AND A RECORD OF IT FOR THE TEACHER TO MONITOR. THE STUDENTS GO AT THEIR OWN PACE IN ALL THE ROOMS, BUT THE COMPUTER APPROACH ALLOWS MORE INDIVIDUALITY AND FEEDBACK ON PROCESS THAN IN OTHER ROOMS. STILL ANOTHER ROOM WITNESSES SPEECH AND CONVERSATION AS THE MEANS OF BUILDING LANGUAGE COMPETENCE. EVERYTHING IS VERBALIZED BEFORE BEING COMMITTED TO PAPER OR COMPUTER. EVERYONE CRITIQUES EACH OTHER'S SPEECH, INCLUDING PRONUNCIATION.

IN A VERY SMALL NUTSHELL YOU HAVE FOUR DESCRIPTIONS OF CONTENT INSIDE A STRUCTURAL ACCOMMODATION WHICH ALLOWS AUTONOMY FOR CONTENT DEFINITION. THE CRITICS OF LOW DEFINITION STRUCTURAL ACCOMMODATION MAY NOT REALIZE THAT CONTENT DEFINITION DOES TAKE PLACE. IT IS MUCH

MORE DEMANDING FOR THE TEACHER THAN THE STRUCTURE CUM "DEEP CONTENT". AND STUDENTS CAN'T HIDE THEIR VARIABILITY AS THEY CAN IN THE WORKBOOK-TYPE STANDARD EXERCISES COMMON IN DEFINED CONTENT STRUCTURES, INTERESTING AS THEY MIGHT BE. THE ADVANTAGE TO THE VALLEY SCHOOLS' LOW CONTENT STRUCTURES IS THAT THE TYPE OF STUDENT WHO COMES IN, IN THE CASE OF ESL CLASSES, THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT STUDENTS, HAS PLENTY IN COMMON WITH THE TEACHER WHO HERSELF IS HISPANIC, OFTEN FROM THE VALLEY. IN THE EXAMPLE ABOVE, THE FIRST TEACHER USED SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF ENGLISH WORDS WHICH WERE COLLOQUIAL TO THE VALLEY IN MEXICO AND TEXAS. THE KIDS KICKED IN ON MEANING IMMEDIATELY AND THEY PLAYED WITH ENGLISH MEANINGS AMAZINGLY QUICKLY. STANDARDIZED EXERCISES WOULDN'T ELICIT THIS KIND OF CULTURAL VALIDITY AND SPONTANEITY OF ACCOMMODATION TO THE STUDENTS WHO ARE SOCIALIZING TO AN AMERICAN SOCIETY AS WELL AS LEARNING ENGLISH.

LINKAGES TO THE EXOSYSTEM ARE WORKED OUT BY THE INDIVIDUAL UNITS, USUALLY THROUGH THE PRINCIPAL. THESE VARY GREATLY BY UNIT AND SCHOOL. IN ONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN LA JOYA, I OBSERVED A BILINGUAL (NOT ESL) MATHEMATICS CLASS TAUGHT BY A RETIRED TEACHER FROM "THE OTHER SIDE" AS MEXICO IS OFTEN REFERRED TO. HE TAUGHT COMPLETELY IN SPANISH A CLASS IN INTRODUCTORY ALGEBRA IN WHICH EACH STUDENT PERFORMED ON THE BOARD AND AT HER/HIS SEAT. PRINCIPLES WERE INDUCED FROM THE PROBLEMS PRESENTED AND EACH STUDENT WAS EXPECTED TO SHOW MASTERY. DISCIPLINE WAS PERFECT. NOT A SOUND WAS HEARD AS THE TEACHER WORKED AT THE BOARD WITH HIS BACK TO THE CLASS. AS WE TWO OBSERVERS TALKED WITH HIM IN SPANISH, THE KIDS WORKED. ONCE HE COMPOSED A POEM ABOUT A BOY WHO SMILED BUT MADE ABSOLUTELY NO MOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A LOOSENED SITUATION. THE KIDS AND THEIR TEACHER MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN IN CAMARGO OR SOME OTHER MEXICAN TOWN - THE CLASSROOM CULTURE WAS THAT OF A HIGHLY STRUCTURED MEXICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL. AND THE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS FELT AT HOME WITH THIS SITUATION.THE TEXAS LAW ALLOWS SCHOOLS TO HIRE MEXICAN TEACHERS FOR BILINGUAL CLASSES AT A SCALE BELOW THAT OF THE PREVAILING SCALE FOR CITIZENS. SO IN THAT SENSE YOU HAVE A REPRODUCTION OF THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN NATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE SCHOOL.

BILINGUAL AND ESL TEACHERS OFTEN TAKE THEIR STUDENTS ON TRIPS FOR CONCERTS, OR TO PRESENT THEIR MUSICAL SKILLS, OR TO MEET POLITICOS OR BUSINESSMEN WHO TELL THEM WHAT THEY EXPECT OF PEOPLE WHOM THEY HIRE. THE FREEDOM ALLOWED TEACHERS OF SUCH SUBUNITS IS EXPECTED SO THAT THEY CAN ORIENT THEIR STUDENTS TO THE AMERICAN WORLD. BUT IT IS DONE WITH THE TEACHER AS INTERPRETER WHO HERSELF IS HISPANIC AND SEES THE REALITY THROUGH THE EYES OF ONE, WHO LIKE THE STUDENTS, ONCE WONDERED WHERE AND HOW SHE WOULD FIT INTO ALL THIS. ADD-ON STRUCTURES WITH LOOSELY DEFINED CONTENT HAVE A LOT TO BE SAID FOR THEM. PRESUMING THAT THOSE WHO ARE THE PROFESSIONAL ACTORS IN THE STRUCTURE KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT. SO SEGMENTED SELECTION OF PEOPLE TO RUN SUCH STRUCTURES IS PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN CONTENT DEFINITION. THE SEGMENTED SELECTION IMPLIES A CULTURAL AFFINITY BETWEEN STUDENT AND TEACHER. ALL OF THIS IS VERIFIED IN THE SAMPLE

OF STUDENT OPINIONS WHICH WE OBTAINED. ALL OF THEIR TEACHERS WERE TEJANOS WHO HAD GROWN UP IN THE VALLEY AND HAD GONE THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE VALLEY OR SOUTH TEXAS.

CONTENT DEFINITION IS PROBABLY THE LEAST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE AUTONOMOUS, LOOSELY LINKED STRUCTURES, SUCH AS ESL AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION. IN THE CASE OF THE ESL TEACHERS, WHAT EMERGED FROM THE INTERVIEWS IS A FEELING ON THE PART OF THE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS THAT ESL TEACHERS CARED. NEARLY EVERY STUDENT STATED THAT AMERICAN TEACHERS CARED MORE ABOUT THEM THAN DID THEIR TEACHERS IN MEXICO. STUDENTS STATED THAT THEY ALL LIKED AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND ALL BUT TWO OUT OF 20 STATED THAT THEY PREFERRED THEM TO MEXICAN SCHOOLS. THEY LIKED THEIR ESL TEACHERS INVARIABLY MORE THAN THE OTHERS. THE AMERICAN TEACHERS WHO WERE DISLIKED WERE THOSE WHO PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO THEM, WHO SPOKE ONLY ENGLISH, OR WHO DIDN'T EXPLAIN THINGS WELL. BUT THEY GAVE THEIR TEACHERS AN OVERWHELMING VOTE OF THANKS FOR LISTENING TO THEM, SHOWING THEM RESPECT, KNOWING THEIR LANGUAGE AND USING IT WITH THEM. THE ESL TEACHERS MENTIONED THAT THE STUDENTS TOLD THEM ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS. ONE EXAMPLE IS A YOUNG LADY WHO IS STAYING WITH RELATIVES AND WHO HAS TO CLEAN HOUSE, WASH THE DISHES, PREPARE DINNER, AND DO OTHER HOUSEHOLD CHORES, APPARENTLY IN RETURN FOR BEING ALLOWED TO STAY WITH THE FAMILY. SHE IS BEING USED AS A MAID AND DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO DO HER HOMEWORK AT NIGHT. SHE WEPT MANY TIMES AS SHE TOLD THE ESL TEACHER ABOUT HER PROBLEM. ALL ESL TEACHERS MENTIONED BEING SURROGATE PARENTS FOR THEIR KIDS WHOSE AGES RANGED FROM 11 TO 18. THEY ALSO ARE ADVOCATES FOR THEIR KIDS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OR ANY OTHER AGENCY. THE ESL CLASS BECOMES A FAMILY VERY QUICKLY.

THE ESL STUDENTS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN AND MEXICAN SCHOOLING

WHO ARE THESE KIDS IN ESL? THEY HAVE COME FROM MEXICO SINCE SEPTEMBER, 1992 AND ARE LIVING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS, MOST OF THEM WITH THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY. THEY CAME FROM THE BORDER AREAS AND FROM THE MONTERREY AREA AS WELL AS FROM SAN LUIS POTOSI AND OTHER POINTS FARTHER DOWN. ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT THESE 24 RESPONDENTS DO NOT YET TRUST THE SCHOOL PEOPLE NOT TO TURN THEM INTO "LA MIGRA" OR THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES SO THEY MAY NOT BE TELLING US WHOM THEY ARE REALLY LIVING WITH. THEY RESPONDED TO THE AUTHOR AND TO MEMBERS OF A GRADUATE CLASS IN SOCIO-CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION, ALL OF WHOM WERE TEACHERS OR OFFICIALS IN SCHOOLS. TWO OF THE RESPONDENTS CLEARLY WERE HESITANT TO TALK WITH THE INTERVIEWER WHO IN THEIR SCHOOL, PROGRESSO JUNIOR HIGH, RIGHT ON THE BORDER, DECIDED WHICH KIDS WOULD BE ACCEPTED INTO THE DISTRICT AND WHICH WOULD NOT. THAT IS A MIGHTY POWERFUL ROLE TO FACE IN AN INTERVIEW ABOUT WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN AND WHY YOU ARE HERE.

THE RESPONDENTS WERE FROM 11 TO 18 YEARS OLD AND WERE ENROLLED IN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. THEIR MEXICAN SCHOOL BACKGROUNDS RANGED FROM ONLY PRIMARIA TO HAVING ENTERED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. WHICH GRADES THEY BELONGED TO IN THE VALLEY SCHOOLS WAS UNCERTAIN

BECAUSE THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE ESL DETERMINES WHAT GRADES THEY WILL ULTIMATELY BE ASSIGNED TO. SO THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN GRADED. THEY ARE MEMBERS OF FAMILIES WITH FROM NO TO 14 SIBLINGS, THE MEDIAN OF WHICH IS 5. SOME OF THE SIBLINGS IN THE LARGE FAMILIES ARE LIVING IN MEXICO. THEY REPORT NEEDING ANYWHERE FROM NO MONEY EACH WEEK TO $50 FOR SCHOOL EXPENSES, THE LATTER RESPONSE FROM TWO GIRLS WHO ARE FROM MIDDLE CLASS MEXICAN FAMILIES. THE MEDIAN OF THAT RESPONSE WAS $20 PER WEEK.

THEIR PARENTS WERE LARGELY OF THE LABORING CLASS. THE MOST AFFLUENT OF THE PARENTS WERE THOSE WHO OWNED STORES IN MEXICO. MANY MEXICAN FAMILIES OF MEANS IN REYNOSA OR CAMARGO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OR A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN EDINBURG. THEY HAVE AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW THIS. THE VARIETIES OF LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FAMILIES WITH MEANS TO MOVE BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE BORDER ARE MANY AND INVENTIVE. BUT THEY ALL INVOLVE HAVING MONEY. THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR COME ACROSS ILLEGALLY AND SOME COME ACROSS WEEKLY, EITHER BY SWIMMING OR IN TRUCKS.

OUR RESPONDENTS ALL CLAIMED TO HAVE A RESIDENCE IN THE DISTRICT WHERE THEY WERE STUDENTS, WHICH MUST BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. PROBING ON THAT ISSUE PROMPTLY SENDS A WARNING TO THE STUDENT AND ENDS ANY CONFIANZA (CONFIDENCE) IN THE INTERVIEWER. THE INTERVIEWS TOOK ABOUT 45 MINUTES AND WERE DONE IN SPANISH. NONE OF THE RESPONDENTS COULD CONVERSE OR WRITE ABOUT THEMSELVES IN ENGLISH. ALL BUT ONE COULD READ AND WRITE SPANISH, WHICH INDICATES ROUGHLY THE DISTRIBUTION (5%) OF ILLITERATES IN SPANISH IN THE ESL CLASSES.

ALL IMMIGRANT KIDS IN ESL SAID THAT THEY LIKED MOST TO BE WITH OTHER ESL KIDS. THEY COMMONLY EAT TOGETHER AND MOVE THROUGH THE HALLS TOGETHER. THEY DISLIKE "GRINGO" STUDENTS, MOST OF WHOM AREN'T ANGLOS. THE STUDENTS THEY ARE REFERRING TO INCLUDE THE MEXICAN AMERICAN KIDS WHO PARADE THEIR AMERICAN QUALITIES AND LOOK DOWN UPON THE "MOJADOS" OR WETBACKS - SWIMMING THE RIVER TO GET OVER. AND SOME REALLY ARE. ALL ESL KIDS REALIZED IT AS AN INSULT. SOME OF THE GIRLS MENTIONED BEING BELITTLED BY OTHER GIRLS FOR THEIR CLOTHES AND HAIR-DO'S AND BEING "MOJADA". SKIN COLOR DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE THE NEWLY IMMIGRATED FROM THOSE TEJANO (MEXICAN AMERICAN) KIDS WHO ARE CITIZENS, EITHER BY BIRTH OR BY NATURALIZATION. SO THE CLASS STRUCTURE IN SCHOOL IS PARTLY DETERMINED BY THE WEARING OF THE RIGHT JEANS, TENNIS SHOES AND SHIRTS, KNOWING HOW TO BEHAVE AS A "TEJANO" AND PARTLY BY CITIZENSHIP STATUS OR RECENCY OF ARRIVAL. SOME REALLY POWERFUL PREJUDICE IS DIRECTED TOWARD THE NEW IMMIGRANT KIDS BY THE SECOND GENERATION AMERICAN TEJANO KIDS, EVEN THE KIDS WHO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR FIVE OR MORE YEARS AND KNOW THE CULTURAL SCRIPT ON THIS SIDE. THE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS DID NOT LIKE THE KIDS WHO ARE RUDE OR "GROSEROS". THEY SAY THEY LIKE THE KIDS IN SCHOOL WHO ARE SERIOUS, POLITE, FRIENDLY, NICE IN CLASS AND WHO SPEAK SPANISH TO THEM.

THE ESL STUDENTS BLOCK THEMSELVES INTO A SMALL SOCIAL UNIT FOR IDENTITY AND SOCIALIZATION. THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THE GANGS WHICH THEY SEE OPERATING IN THE SCHOOLS, BUT THESE GANGS ARE NOT THE VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE LOS ANGELES TYPES SO MUCH AS PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS OF TEJANO KIDS WHO SIMPLY FORM A TIGHT ALLIANCE IN JUNIOR HIGH AND HANG WITH IT THROUGH SENIOR HIGH. THE ESL KIDS ARE AS ONE IN THEIR DISDAIN OF DISCIPLINE IN THE AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN WHICH THEY SAY THAT THE STUDENTS HAVE NO RESPECT FOR THE TEACHERS AND USE BAD LANGUAGE WITH EACH OTHER. THE ONE ASPECT OF MEXICAN SCHOOLS WHICH THEY FEEL MIGHT BE COPIED IS THE DISCIPLINE. WHILE ALL LIKE THEIR BUS RIDES WHICH ALLOW THEM TIME TO RAP WITH THEIR FRIENDS, MANY COMMENT ON THE BAD LANGUAGE USED AND THE POOR DISCIPLINE EVIDENT ON THE BUSES. LIKE IN MINNESOTA, PENNSYLVANIA OR ANYWHERE ELSE. BUT THESE KIDS FEEL IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO GO TO A SCHOOL AND ARE OUTRAGED INSIDE BY WHAT THEY SEE AS KIDS NOT RESPECTING IT. OBJECTIVELY, THE SCHOOLS IN THE VALLEY HAVE EXCELLENT DISCIPLINE COMPARED TO MOST REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES. OUTLAWED IN VALLEY SCHOOLS ARE HEAD SCARVES, TATTOOS, BAGGY PANTS AND SHIRTS, EARRINGS FOR BOYS AND TIGHT CLOTHING, WITH NEARLY ZERO COMPLAINTS FROM THE KIDS. BUT TO RECENT IMMIGRANTS, THE RESPECT FOR TEACHERS IS NOT EVIDENT. THEY ARE USED TO THE KIND OF DISCIPLINE THAT THE MEXICAN ALGEBRA TEACHER IN LA JOYA HAS IN HIS CLASSROOM, AND FEEL THAT THE SCHOOL IS DEMEANED BY ITS ABSENCE.

THE STUDENTS LIKE THE FREE LUNCH AND BREAKFAST AND ARE REALLY PLEASED BY THE FREE TEXTBOOKS. IN MEXICO, FREE TEXTBOOKS ARE ONLY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS; SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS PAY FOR ALL OF THEIR TEXTS. HOWEVER, ALL THE STUDENTS SAY THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE EASIER OVER HERE, AND ASSIGN LITTLE HOMEWORK COMPARED TO WHAT THEY WERE USED TO IN MEXICO. OVER HALF OF THE STUDENTS REPORTED THAT THEY GET HIGHER GRADES HERE THAN IN MEXICO. WITHOUT EXCEPTION THEY LIKE THE EXPERIENCE AND LOVE ACCESS TO COMPUTERS. THEY FEEL THAT EACH NATION'S SCHOOL SYSTEM IS GOOD IN ITS OWN WAY AND SHOULD NOT CHANGE TO FIT THE MODEL OF THE OTHER COUNTRY.

WHY ARE THEY HERE? ALL WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH. ONLY ONE WANTED TO RETURN TO MEXICO TO LIVE. ALL THE REST WISHED TO REMAIN HERE TO WORK AND TO VISIT MEXICO ONLY OCCASIONALLY TO SEE THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES. MOST HAVE SIBLINGS IN MEXICO. ALL ARE WITH FAMILY, RELATIVES OR FRIENDS, WITH ONLY TWO OF THE LATTER. THEY HAVE RATHER CLEAR GOALS FOR OCCUPATIONS AND MANY WANT TO GO TO A UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES. THEIR GOALS ARE NOT UNREALISTICALLY HIGH, BUT INCLUDE SUCH OCCUPATIONS AS EQUIPMENT OPERATOR, POLICEMAN, TEACHER, NURSE, SOCIAL WORKER, CARPENTER, PHYSICIAN, ENGINEER, AND COMPUTER TECHNICIAN (A VERY COMMON CHOICE). ALL BUT THREE OF THEM WANT A BETTER LIFE THAN THEIR PARENTS HAVE BUT ARE BEAUTIFULLY EXPRESSIVE ON HOW THIS DESIRE DOES NOT MEAN A DISDAIN FOR THEIR PARENTS.

WHAT IS OCCURRING IS A SEGMENTED SOCIALIZATION PROCESS IN WHICH THE ESL CLASS IS THE PRIMARY GROUP AND ALLOWS THE MEMBERS TO DISCUSS WHAT IS AND IS NOT GOOD ABOUT THEIR SURROUNDINGS. THEY REENFORCE EACH OTHER'S HOLDING TO WHATEVER THEY CAN OF MEXICAN CULTURE WHILE

REACHING FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE NEW COUNTRY. THE STRUCTURE ALLOWS THEM TO BE SELECTIVE IN THEIR CHOICES OF FRIENDS AND TO RELATE TO A SMALL NUMBER OF TEACHERS, RATHER THAN TO MANY. THEY CAN REACH OUT TO JOIN SELECTED SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS. SOCCER IS BUILDING UP IN THE VALLEY AND EVERY COACH WOULD LOVE TO PLAY THE IMMIGRANT KIDS IMMEDIATELY, BUT THEY MUST BE WITH THEIR PARENTS IN ORDER TO PLAY THE FIRST YEAR. AND THEY PLAY MARVELOUSLY EXCITING GAMES. SOCCER IS WHERE THE SHORT, WIRY VALLEY KIDS SHINE, ESPECIALLY THE NEW IMMIGRANTS, BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE THE GIGANTIC STUDENTS FROM CENTRAL AND EAST TEXAS HAVE NO ADVANTAGE OVER THEM.

THE STRUCTURE IS VERY SUPPORTIVE IN THAT IT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THEIR BACKGROUND AND ALLOWS THE TEACHER TO GRADUALLY MOVE THEM INTO THE POSTURE OF AMERICANIZED STUDENT. THIS IS NOT A PROGRAM OF CULTURAL SHOCK OR IMMERSION BUT A PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THEIR CULTURE WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO SHAPE THE CONTENT OF THE STRUCTURE ALONG WITH THE TEACHER. THE STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE TEACHER MAKE ACCOMMODATIONS SELECTIVELY TO THE EXOSYSTEM. EASING INTO THE CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL AS WELL AS TO SOCIETY IS THE PROCESS. THE TEACHER AS ADVOCATE OF THE GROUP IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED QUICKLY BY THE KIDS WHO DO NOT OUTWARDLY EXPRESS THEIR THANKS BUT THEY SHOW THEIR LOVE FOR HER IN COUNTLESS WAYS. ONE LITTLE STUDENT WITH A FINE MIND ALWAYS PUTS AT THE TOP OF HIS PAPER "FROM YOUR EXCELLENT STUDENT". THE SAME TEACHER WAS NOT ABLE TO GET ANOTHER DIMINUTIVE STUDENT ON THE BASEBALL TEAM BUT CONVINCED THE COACH TO APPOINT HIM MANAGER. HE WOULD FIGHT GUERRILLAS FOR HER IN PERU.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE LEARNING WHICH IS OCCURRING? THE TARGET IS TO GET ALL ESL STUDENTS TO PASS THE STATEWIDE TEST BY THE END OF THEIR SECOND YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL. IF THE STUDENTS FAIL A PORTION OF IT, THEY CAN TAKE THAT PORTION OF IT AGAIN. THEIR ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS PROGRESS MUCH MORE QUICKLY THAN THEIR WRITING SKILLS, BUT THEIR ENGLISH READING SKILLS IMPROVE IN ACCORD WITH THEIR SKILLS IN READING IN SPANISH. THE BETTER SPANISH READERS LEARN ENGLISH MORE QUICKLY. NEWLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANTS HAVE A BETTER MATH BACKGROUND THAN AMERICAN STUDENTS BECAUSE OF THE MORE RIGOROUS MEXICAN CURRICULUM WHICH IS COMPLETELY OBLIGATORY AND MERCILESS IN ITS EXPECTATIONS.

CONCLUSION: STRUCTURE WITHOUT DEFINED CONTENT ACCOMODATES SOCIALIZATION WITHOUT TEARS

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SCHOOLING ON THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE RIVER PROVIDES A CHALLENGE IN SOCIALIZATION TO THE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT STUDENT BUT IS A PIECE OF CAKE IN MASTERING THE LIGHT CONTENT DEMANDS. THE ESL PROGRAM IS A STRUCTURE WHICH ALLOWS THE STUDENT TO SOCIALIZE AT A SLOWER PACE THAN WOULD BE DEMANDED IF THE STUDENT WERE TO ENTER THE MAINSTREAM OF THE SCHOOL WITHOUT THE PROTECTION OF THE SPECIAL STRUCTURE. IT PROTECTS THE STUDENT CULTURALLY AND PRESENTS THE AMERICAN CONTENT ON TERMS LEAST DAMAGING AND MOST CULTURALLY PALATABLE TO THE STUDENT. THE PRESCRIPTION OF A CONTENT WOULD ELIMINATE MUCH OF THE VALUE OF THE STRUCTURE BY REMOVING FROM

THE TEACHER THE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE PARTICULAR STUDENTS AT THEIR STAGE OF LEARNING AND BACKGROUND. THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS PROCEEDING AS AN INTACT PRIMARY GROUP ALLOWS THEM TO TAKE THE SCHOOL ON THEIR OWN TERMS AND AT THEIR OWN SPEED. IF THEY WERE MAINSTREAMED, OR EVEN IF THE ESL WERE ONLY A CLASS PERIOD, THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS MIGHT BE FAR MORE TRAUMATIC AND THE LEARNING CLIMATE MORE DIFFICULT. THE INDIVIDUAL IMMIGRANT WOULD BE ONE AGAINST THE WORLD IN SUCH A SITUATION.

THE ECONOMY OF THE VALLEY: WEAK CANDIDATE FOR A HUMAN CAPITAL MODEL

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VALLEY AS A UNIT, ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER REQUIRES AN APPROACH TO DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL AS WELL AS CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. THE VALLEY WILL REMAIN COLONIALIZED AS LONG AS ITS ECONOMY IS RESTRICTED TO GROWING AND SHIPPING OUT PRIME MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURING CHEAP PRODUCTS. THE HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE VALLEY IS SEEN AS BAD NEWS BY THE REST OF THE STATE BECAUSE OF ITS LOW TEST SCORES. HOWEVER, THE OTHER ABILITIES OF THE HUMAN BEINGS ARE WHAT MAKE THE VALLEY AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR BUSINESS. THESE ABILITIES ARE NOT MEASURED BY ACHIEVEMENT TESTS NOR CLAIMED AS OUTPUTS BY THE SCHOOLS. ITS PEOPLE REALLY WANT TO WORK. ONCE ON A JOB, THEY ARE INCREDIBLY LOYAL TO AN EMPLOYER NO MATTER HOW CHEAPLY HE PAYS THEM. THEY WORK HARD FOR LONG HOURS AND DO NOT COMPLAIN. AND THEY WORK WELL, THEY ARE FASTIDIOUSLY CLEAN AND SELDOM ARE ABSENT OR LATE FOR WORK. VALLEY PEOPLE RISE EARLY.

THE TEACHERS OF THE VALLEY ARE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE WORK ETHIC OF THE VALLEY. MANY REQUEST ACCESS TO THEIR CLASSROOMS TWO WEEKS AHEAD OF THE OPENING OF SCHOOL SO THEY CAN BE READY BEFORE THE ORIENTATION DAYS. THEIR CARS CAN BE SEEN IN THE PARKING LOTS OF SCHOOLS UNTIL AFTER 5:00 PM. THEY VOLUNTEER TO VISIT THEIR STUDENTS' HOMES, ANSWER TELEPHONE CALLS ABOUT HOMEWORK, AND DIG INTO THEIR OWN POCKETS FOR REWARDS AND HELPS FOR THE STUDENTS. IT IS AN NEA-AFT NIGHTMARE. THE TEACHERS CAN LEAVE THEIR JOBS AND GET ANOTHER WITHIN A FEW HOURS WITH THE HIGH DEMAND FOR TEACHERS IN THE VALLEY, SO IT IS NOT THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE BOSSES SO MUCH AS WORK NORMS THAT PUT THIS INTO PLAY. THOSE WORK NORMS ARE THE CREATIONS OF TEJANOS AND MEXICAN PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY. THEY ARE REPRODUCED IN THE SCHOOLS ON BOTH SIDES.

THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE IS READY FOR ECONOMIC TAKEOFF GIVEN THE RIGHT KINDS OF INVESTMENT. SCHOOL PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY CAN NO LONGER WAIT FOR THE FUTURE TO HAPPEN BUT MUST PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND RESHAPING THE PUBLIC SECTOR POLICIES TO ALLOW THE VALLEY TO MATURE INTO A MODERN ECONOMY. BUT THE KINDS OF LINKAGE WHICH WILL ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH BECAUSE OF THE STRUCTURE OF FINANCING, OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES, WHICH USES THE VALLEY AS AN UNDERDEVELOPED AREA SO THAT IT CAN HAVE CHEAP FARM CROPS. VALLEY PEOPLE ARE NOT INTO RESISTANCE SINCE IT HAS NOT

EARNED THEM MUCH IN THE PAST, SO PREPARING LINKAGES AND USING THEM ONCE ESTABLISHED IS SOMETHING WHICH MUST DEVELOP GRADUALLY. THE POWER FIGURES IN THE VALLEY SUCH AS REP. DE LA GARZA HAVE NOT PROVIDED AGGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE THE VALLEY ECONOMY. REP. HENRY GONZALES OF SAN ANTONIO HAS BEEN MORE OF AN AGGRESSIVE TYPE, BUT IT IS A TYPICAL RURAL-URBAN CONTRAST IN DISCUSSING THE TWO MEN'S STYLES.

THE VALLEY'S ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FUTURE DEPENDS GREATLY ON THE HIGH STAKES GAME ATTENDING THE THEE NATION FREE TRADE AGREEMENT, WHICH IS BY NO MEANS A DONE DEAL AND WHICH MANY HISPANICS HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE LOSS OF JOBS ON THE AMERICAN SIDE. THE SCHOOLS ON BOTH SIDES ARE PROVIDING THE HUMAN CAPITAL FOR THE CHANGES TO COME IN THE AGREEMENT. THE ESL STUDENTS EXHIBIT IN THEMSELVES THE PERCEPTIONS OF WHERE THE ECONOMY IS GOING AND THE PART THEY WANT TO PLAY IN IT. THEY ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE HIGH STAKES GAME BEING PLAYED OUT AND THEY HAVE MADE DECISIONS ABOUT WHERE THEY WANT TO BE POSITIONED. THE SCHOOLS ON THE AMERICAN SIDE WITH THEIR STRUCTURES OF ACCOMMODATION FOR IMMIGRANTS ARE PROVIDING A CHOICE FOR THOSE STUDENTS AND ARE ANTICIPATING NATIONAL POLICY BY THEIR ORGANIZATION OF THE ESL PROGRAM.

STATE RESOURCES AND A LOW LEVEL OF NATIONAL RESOURCES, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE SCHOOLS OF THE VALLEY TO PROVIDE THE PREPARATION FOR STUDENTS IN THE ABSENCE OF A MORE COMPLEX ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE. SO FAR THE HUMAN CAPITAL MODEL DOES NOT EXPLAIN THIS VALLEY'S OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE, AS THE VALLEY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER FORMS ONE PERIPHERAL UNIT SERVING THE TEXAS CORE. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE VALLEY WILL INCREASINGLY CONSTITUTE A SINGLE CULTURAL-ECONOMIC UNIT WITH SCHOOLS ON BOTH SIDES PROVIDING SOME POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE FROM POVERTY FOR THE STUDENTS.

THIS PAPER REPORTS THE BEGINNING OF A STUDY OF A SPECIAL POPULATION ACCOMMODATED BY A LOOSELY INTEGRATED STRUCTURE WITHIN THE SCHOOLS WHICH PROVIDES SKILLS ORIENTATION AND SOCIALIZATION INTO THE SCHOOL AND THE EMERGING VALLEY CULTURE.

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